

Current law provides health and commissary benefits to un-remarried former spouses who meet the 20/20/20 rule—those who were married to military personnel for at least 20 years, whose spouse served in the military for at least 20 years, and whose marriage and spouse's military service overlapped for 20 years.

A problem that frequently arises is that many members who retire upon attaining 20 years of service were married a year or two after entering active duty. The overlap of their service and marriage is just short of 20 years. Thus regardless of the subsequent length of marriage the spouse can never meet the criteria requiring the 20 year overlap.

The bill would eliminate this current inequity by extending to un-remarried former spouse's medical care and commissary benefits if the member performed at least 20 years of service which is creditable in determining the member's eligibility for retired pay and the former spouse was married to the member for a period of at least 17 years during those years of service.

This inequity affects not only individuals in my district, but spouses in every district across the Nation. Since the introduction of H.R. 475 last Congress, I have received letters and phone calls from Massachusetts, Idaho, California, Ohio, Arizona, Florida, Washington, Maryland, Kansas, and Utah.

The Department of Defense has stated that by providing a more liberal entitlement to these individuals, we would "tax" the Department's resources thus increasing the budgetary requirements. Well, I say it is worth it when I read about a woman from Arizona who was married to her husband for 36 years, but because she married him 1 year after his initial enlistment, she missed the 20-20-20 rule by 11 months. These stories are tragic, and we must correct this unfairness.

I urge my colleagues to join as cosponsors of this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO DONNA NIEHOUSE,
OUTGOING PRESIDENT, LAKE
ELSINORE VALLEY CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication to the community and to the overall well-being of Lake Elsinore is exceptional. Lake Elsinore has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated business and community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give time and talent to making their communities a better place to live and work. Donna Niehouse is one of these individuals.

On January 20, 2001, Donna Niehouse was honored as the outgoing 1999–2000 President of the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce. Donna's efforts over the past two years as President of the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce led to the Chamber's financial stability through her sound judgement and leadership. Additionally, Lake Elsinore has seen the

growth of the monthly Street Fairs and Cruise Nights held in the historic downtown Lake Elsinore—leading the Chamber's ability to turn over the operation of these events to the Downtown Merchants Association.

The leadership of Donna Niehouse has also led to the Economic Development Committee's returning to their original concept of monthly luncheons, now one of the most highly attended events in the community, and the establishment of the Chamber website. Donna has been instrumental in strengthening the bonds between the Chamber, City and business community.

Donna's work to promote the businesses, schools and community organizations of the City of Lake Elsinore make me proud to call her a community member and fellow American. I know that all of Lake Elsinore is grateful for her contribution to the betterment of the community and salute her as she departs the Lake Elsinore Valley Chamber of Commerce after two years of service. I look forward to continuing to work with her for the good of our community in the future.

PEACE AND QUIET OF THE PARKS NEED CONTINUED PROTECTION

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, the new Administration is reviewing some of the actions of their predecessors. That is understandable and in some cases may be appropriate.

But I am concerned about reports that the review may lead to actions to delay or undo important recent initiatives to protect the public health and safety and the quality of our environment.

For example, the Forest Service recently completed development of new rules for the management of the remaining roadless areas in the national forests. They are sound, balanced rules to protect these areas that are so important for fish and wildlife, clean water, recreation, and other values. They should be allowed to stand.

Similarly, the National Park Service has acted to reduce the noise and other adverse effects on some parks for snowmobiles and aircraft. Here again, it would be a mistake to simply discard the work that has been done to respond to some very real problems.

As the Denver Post noted in a recent editorial, "the Park Service didn't react arbitrarily. The agency held extensive public hearings, conducted numerous scientific studies, and invited tens of thousands of written citizen comments. . . . The Park Service was responding to a public outcry, so the new policies in fact largely emerged from the grassroots. . . . Our beloved national parks must be preserved for future generations. . . . the ban on loud, intrusive machines in these awe-inspiring wonderlands should remain."

Mr. Speaker, I agree, and for the benefit of our colleagues, I am submitting the full Denver Post editorial for inclusion in the RECORD.

[From the Denver Post, Jan. 23, 2001]

DON'T DISRUPT PARKS POLICY

President Bush should stand up to the narrow political interests who would wreck the tranquility of our national parks.

For years, visitors at Yellowstone and Grand Canyon National parks often complained about snowmobiles in Yellowstone, and airplane and helicopter flights over the Grand Canyon. Clearly, the National Park Service had to craft a new policy responding to numerous citizens infuriated by the noise, pollution, wildlife harassment and inappropriate machine use. In Yellowstone, for instance, visitors couldn't even hear Old Faithful's great roar over the constant whine of hundreds of snowmobiles.

But the Park Service didn't react arbitrarily. The agency held extensive public hearings, conducted numerous scientific studies and invited tens of thousands of written citizen comments.

Based on that input, the Park Service imposed the bans on Grand Canyon aircraft flights and snowmobiles in Yellowstone.

However, some conservative Western politicians want President Bush to discard these thoughtful policies. In a Dec. 27 letter, U.S. Rep. Jim Hansen, a Utah Republican, told Bush he should overturn a host of Clinton administration public land policies. At the top of Hansen's promachine wish list: the ban on Grand Canyon aircraft flights and snowmobiles in Yellowstone and other national parks.

Hansen wrongly asserts that these policies were imposed top-down and would harm good stewardship of our public lands. Nothing could be further from the truth. In both the Yellowstone and Grand Canyon cases, the Park Service was responding to a public outcry, so the new policies in fact largely emerged from the grassroots.

Moreover, most people who visit either park don't use the machines. Instead, they walk, hike, ski, ride horses or mules, or take the family car, public transportation or, in Yellowstone, the quieter snow coach tours.

By contrast, of the 130,000 miles of snowmobile trails in the continental United States, only 670 miles are in the national parks. So Hansen's assertion that efforts to protect the parks' tranquility somehow restrict public access are just plain bizarre.

Our beloved national parks must be preserved for future generations, not sacrificed for short-term political gamesmanship.

Mr. President, as a Texan you know one of the greatest qualities about the West is the pockets of public land where it's still possible to find a little peace and quiet. Please don't ruin that irreplaceable experience at our national parks. The ban on loud, intrusive machines in these awe-inspiring wonderlands should remain.

A TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF DR.
BENJAMIN MAJOR, OAKLAND,
CALIFORNIA

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of loss that I rise to pay tribute to Dr. Benjamin Major, a prominent Bay Area physician, who passed on January 4, 2001, in Kensington, California.

Dr. Major was a graduate of Fisk University and graduated from Meharry Medical College